GUIDE

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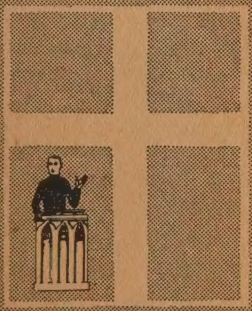
UP-TO-DATE CATECHETICS

An Interview with Johannes Hofinger, S.J.
by Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.P.

PRINCIPLES OF MODERN CATECHETICS

DIRECTIVES FOR THE CATECHIST

NOVEMBER 1960, No. 152



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Paulist Institute

Father Michell, Superior General of the Paulists, officially announced in September the establishment of the Paulist Institute for Religious Research. A board of three members was appointed. Father John J. Keating, C.S.P., was named director; Father George C. Hagmaier, C.S.P., was designated associate director; the present writer will be associated with them and will continue to edit *Guide* as the official publication of the Institute.

Father Keating was long assigned to the Paulist Information Center in New York, served at Ohio State Catholic Center, and is the author of the widely-used text, "Outlines of Catholic Teaching." Father Hagmaier is co-author of the current Catholic best-seller, "Counselling the Catholic," instructor in Pastoral Psychology for Paulist graduate students and is well known to lecture audiences.

The purpose of the Institute is to help extend the effectiveness of the Apostolate to non-Catholics. It will be concerned both with the theoretical and practical aspects of winning converts. The Institute hopes to be of service to all who are interested in the conversion of our country.

Assisting the board of the Institute is an advisory committee of Paulists who by special studies or long experience will help to further its objectives. A long range program of graduate studies is already under way.

Father Keating and his associates are already fulfilling numerous speaking engagements in connection with these objectives. These include consultation with priests assigned to direct diocesan programs for converts; talks on this subject at regional conventions of the CCD; clergy conferences or workshops in various dioceses; along with lectures or courses in seminaries, convents and conventions of the laity.

We will be grateful for your prayers, interest and active co-operation. And if you need a competent speaker, or seek advice, just visit or write: John J. Keating, C.S.P., 411 West 59th Street, New York 19, N. Y.

JOHN T. MCGINN, C.S.P.

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Up-to-Date Catechetics

An Interview with Johannes Hofinger, S.J.

By Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.P.

Should we revise the content of our catechisms in teaching Catholic children and adult inquirers? Two cardinals, 70 archbishops and bishops—along with some 220 missioners from all parts of the world and catechetical experts—discussed this question last July. They met in Eichstaett in West Germany at the International Study Week on Mission Catechetics. Father Hofinger, one of the leading figures in the catechetical revival, organized the congress.

At the conclusion of the conference, Father Stransky requested Father Hofinger to summarize the basic ideas of the new catechetics. Father Stransky, who worked closely with Father Hofinger at Eichstaett, is a Paulist studying Missiology at the Gregorian University in Rome. Because of the importance of the revival in catechetics, this paper is published simultaneously in GUIDE *and in* THE CATHOLIC WORLD. *Two other significant papers, resulting from the Eichstaett meeting, are also published in this issue of* GUIDE.

What brought about the recent catechetical "revival"?

As long as children and adults were living in deeply religious families and breathing the air of a strongly Christian environment, "traditional" catechetical instruction was thought to be adequate. It systematized in questions and answers what children were already living—a Christian life in a Christian environment. Its tone was almost exclusively intellectual and abstract.

The catechetical revival began about fifty years ago in central Europe. There, particularly in formerly "Catholic" cities such as Munich and Vienna, the Church was witnessing a new phenomenon. Thousands of children were stepping from homes where religion was weak into a society which was rapidly becoming de-Christianized. Many ceased to practice the faith.

A closer look at the religious instruction being given revealed serious faults. At the end of the eighteenth century the state had made elementary school attendance compulsory and hence religion had become another "school" subject. The emphasis in religious instruction was no longer on faith and life but on doctrine and knowledge. Worse yet, both doctrine and method were tainted with a popular, enlightened rationalism which tended to replace the truths of revelation with a religion of reason, turning religion itself into a mere handmaid of morality.

The need gradually became clear. The more the religious milieu broke down, the more it became necessary to instill *personal conviction* in the pupils. Catechesis had to do more than instruct minds; it had to form solid apostolic Christians.

This is the central idea behind the catechetical revival: we must "convert" children and adult catechumens totally to Christ, and this first "conversion" must last throughout their lives.

Do you think that this kind of crisis in education is a local problem—or do you find that similar if not identical problems exist every place in the world?

Obviously the problems of religious instruction are not confined to central Europe. I have traveled around the world seven times. Recently I was in the United States; soon I will be going to South Africa. The more I travel and the more people I meet, the more I am convinced that what is most lacking in catechetics today is neither good will not interest on the part of teachers, but an intelligent appreciation of the basic principles and methods of proclaiming God's word so that it can achieve

the effect God wants. And I know that this isn't just my own opinion. There was almost universal agreement about this at the International Study Week on Mission Catechetics held this summer at Eichstaett, Germany.

With the breakdown of religious traditions and the spread of materialism and Communism, the old distinction between "mission lands" and other countries is disappearing. Although the situation may differ somewhat from place to place, the basic problem is the same in Europe and Africa, Japan and the United States, South America and India. The catechetical movement is gradually becoming world-wide, and interest in up-to-date catechetics is growing.

What was the significance of the recent Eichstaett meeting?

For the first time, internationally known catechetical scholars and missionaries came together to pool their knowledge and experience in the catechetical movement in an attempt to adapt catechetics to the missionary needs of the Church today. To complain about old catechisms and old methods would have been easy; we wanted a positive program. By intensive teamwork, we drew up and approved unanimously a set of principles for catechesis, guides for catechists and suggestions for writing new catechisms and religious textbooks.

What is the general trend in modern catechesis?

We can never achieve success in our teaching apostolate by a mere increase in catechetical activity. A reform is needed which combines the findings of modern psychology and the conclusions of the so-called "kerygmatic revival." That word *kerygmatic* frightens most people. It shows that the revival stresses the content of teaching rather than method and techniques. The Greek *kerygma* means "message" and in the New Testament *kerygma* means specifically the Good News of Salvation that Christ preached and commissioned His Church to proclaim.

How can we impart to the pupil not mere knowledge of formulas but a consciousness of a reality? How can our catechesis introduce the student to this Christian message (*kerygma*) expressed in the synthetic ordering of doctrines, in the Bible and in liturgical worship? What is the best order of presentation and what doctrines should be emphasized if catechesis is to be of greatest profit to people today, to develop and confirm a real Christian life in them and form faithful disciples of Christ who give witness to Him? In presenting the whole *kerygma,* what should we emphasize? These are the questions we tried to answer at Eichstaett.

But haven't we always been teaching religion in this "kerygmatic" way?

I don't think so. Read the older catechisms and teachers' manuals.

One of the reasons for the large number of fallen-aways today has undoubtedly been the inadequacy of the faulty religious instruction which they received.

So much of our catechetical instruction has been but a summary, or watering-down, of scientific theology. Now I by no means disparage theology; I was once a professor of dogma. One of the "Basic Principles of Modern Catechetics" agreed upon at Eichstaett calls for "Systematic Teaching: The systematic presentation of the faith has its roots in the Creeds and preaching of the early Christian proclamation, and has derived its organic development from the authoritative teaching of the Church throughout the ages. The catechism gives the learner spiritual insight into the relationship between the faith and Christian life and enables him to cope with the questions of the day as an articulate Christian, and to express his faith to those who inquire about it."

It's just that theological science has a very different purpose from catechetics. Theology is a disciplined and detailed contemplation of God's revelation, taught primarily from the viewpoint of truth, without considering too much its value for life. Catechetics treats the same doctrine from a different standpoint, as a good, as a value for the person, as a doctrine for living. In most cases, Christ's word can be a power to mold lives only if it is identified and experienced as the one and only worth-while thing in life. It's not enough that our children know their faith, they must also see its unity, its beauty, and experience its warmth. This cannot be achieved by intellectual techniques of instruction alone. The catechism that just lists doctrines may attain thoroughness, accuracy and clarity,

but is it an organic unit that brings out that God has Good News for us? We know many details and dispensable fragments, but find it hard to see the core of a message which God says surpasses by far what the heart of man can think of or hope for.

As we often heard at Eichstaett, let's emphasize the inner core of God's revelation, so that the details or borderlines of revelation are seen as secondary.

What is this inner core?

We tried to outline the basic content of catechesis in the Eichstaett principles.

Our Gospel is nothing else than Christ introducing us into intimacy with God: "No man comes to the Father except by Me" (*John,* 14:6).

Catechesis is Christ-centered, because there is no aid given us on the way leading to the Father which has not its center in Christ and does not actively share in His mission "to save that which was lost" (*Luke,* 19:10). Through Christ we know about the Father and receive the Good News about His Kingdom. By His death, resurrection and ascension, Christ saves us from our sins. He works in us through the Holy Spirit and leads us toward that day when He will judge all men and bring the world to its final perfection. Christ continues to live and act and complete His Father's work in His Church, especially through His sacraments. He teaches, directs, sanctifies His own by means of His representatives. The commandments, flowing from His Great Commandment of Love, are not merely divine directives but our loving response to Christ's divine love—living out the implications of His sacraments.

A dogma, then, has greater or less consequence in our catechesis in the measure that it expresses a more or less significant aspect of this Mystery of Christ, As Father Domenico Grasso, S.J., of the Roman Gregorian University explained at Eichstaett, grace will have more importance than sin, sanctifying grace more than actual grace, the Holy Spirit more than Our Lady, the Resurrection of Christ more than His childhood, the mystical aspect of the Church more than its juridical, the Church's liturgy more than private devotions: baptism more than penance, the Eucharist more than the Last Anointing; the Bible more than any other book.

You see that our modern catechetics is incorporating the conclusions of the biblical and liturgical movements.

What has the biblical movement contributed to modern catechetics?

The Bible must be given a prominent place in catechetical teaching because it is God's own inspired Book. This doesn't mean doing what some "revised" question-and-answer catechisms have done—merely adding scripture texts as a kind of divine support.

The basic method of all catechesis is to teach the way God has given His revelation: God performs some concrete event which radiates and reveals a doctrine that would move men's hearts to live according to it. For example, in the Old Testament God intervened in history at Sinai when He fulfilled His earlier promises and freely chose Israel as His people. The biblical *events* thereafter remind the Israelites what God has done for men. They dwelt on the doctrine of God's loving concern for His chosen people to prepare a way for the world's Messiah. God chose them as His own and binds them to Himself. This initial action of God awakens a response of love and gratitude and a sense of unworthiness, and binds the people to remain deeply faithful to Him by keeping His commandments. Event—truth—action. God is the best modern Pedagogue!

The biblical movement has brought out more clearly the organic unity of the whole Bible, not a disconnected series of interesting stories or moral demands, but a history of salvation through which and in which God has chosen to save us. Once again, the Bible finds its center in Christ, for it relates the role of Christ in the Father's whole historical plan: how God prepared for Christ's coming in the New Testament, how His coming brought about our salvation and reunion, and how Christ continues to communicate Himself through a Chosen People, animated by the Holy Spirit, until He returns as the Lord of Glory. It is through the Bible, then, that we learn God's pattern of working His plan of salvation in time and space.

Do you use the Bible extensively?

Yes. Modern catechetics no longer uses the Bible as an accessory, a supplementary

proof of the doctrine or a mere study of the historical background to revelation. In certain recent textbooks, the biblical quotations no longer come at the end but have become the very point of departure for a catechetical lesson. One of the Dutchmen's recommendations is that younger students possess a book of Bible "sermons" which contain passages from the historical books, psalms, prophetical writings, Gospels, epistles and the Apocalypse. Explanatory sections clarify the connection of one sermon to another, and point out what bearing the passages has on God's plan of salvation. With such a preparation, by adolescence everyone should possess his own complete New Testament, to be used as a source and reference book during catechism classes. It is still as manner to read God's Book in a prayerful and reverent manner. It can become, as it should, his lifelong guide-mentor.

What has the liturgical movement contributed to modern catechetics?

A recital of past biblical events does not suffice for good catechesis because God continues to intervene in history, especially in the Mass and the sacraments. By taking part in the Liturgy, the Christian enters into the stream of grace God can allow at the creation of the world. Liturgical catechesis, then, completes the work of biblical catechesis and the necessary presentation of doctrine.

We celebrate the Liturgy if we consider its primary purpose catechetical. It is primarily directed to the worship of God; we pray what we know. Catechesis leads "the royal priesthood" (*I Peter*, 2:9) into the Liturgy so that we can fully join the community in its divine worship and know what we are praying.

At the same time, the Liturgy contains a wealth of instructive power. In the course of the Church's liturgical year, we have summarized the story of salvation: it speaks of Christ in those who pre-figured Him, in His teaching and life, His miracles, death and resurrection; it tells of Christ living in the saints of the past and in us today. The Liturgy also teaches us through the texts, mainly from the Bible, that are read and sung by the Church. The sound pedagogical principles of "the intuitive process" and "learning by doing" are used in the Liturgy. The rites with their words and gestures, poetry and music, indeed, help make the Christian message do more than merely penetrate the mind.

Here I may mention a practical consideration touched on Dutchmen: "In order that the Liturgy may produce its due catechetical effect, it should display its intrinsic excellence by means of its intelligibility, beauty and clarity. Only then can its full catechetical value be exploited. But we cannot do this unless certain reforms are introduced." Some suggestions, for example, centered on having the whole Mass of the Catechumens in the vernacular.

Can we revise easily our old catechisms which have not integrated the aims of modern catechetics?

We had to face this question honestly at Dutchmen, since so much time, money and talent depend on the answer. We agreed that new catechisms cannot just add a few more questions, scriptural quotations and liturgical directives. The Dutchmen's conclusion reads: "The mere revision or modification of former textbooks or catechisms which were not drawn up according to the principles of the catechetical renewal cannot produce a good work which fulfills the basic demands of catechetics."

Complete revisions are found, for example, in the new German catechism and the recent syllabus for the Archdiocese of Bombay. (The introduction of the latter speaks of a refusal to copy "old catechisms" and of making "a drastic rearrangement" of that type.)

A catechism is only a tool, as we said, stress too much the intellectual and spiritual formation of the catechist himself. The ideal catechism, nevertheless, is a guide. More than a list of questions and answers it must guide both the teacher and pupil in the three pedagogical steps of seeing, thinking and doing. Thus, we desire a lesson-form catechism that moves from the concrete to the doctrine and to life, organically centered around our life in Christ and introducing one into the Bible and into the Liturgy. The questions and answers which come at the end of the whole lesson merely summarize and make precise the contents of the lesson.

Is this method underrating the importance of memory work?

This is a common accusation based on misunderstanding. Memory comes from

God, and the whole man must be won for God. That includes the memory. However, modern catechetics supplies a sound pedagogical principle: never memorize anything that is not first clearly understood. "Assimilation before memory." How false the method: have the children memorize as much as they can, so that they have a storehouse of matter to be tapped later in life when they can understand. We can easily distort the joyful character of the Christian message by creating anxieties accompanying an exaggerated number of little-understood formulas to be learned by heart, and by attendance at class which can often become a dry exegesis of an official catechism's questions and answers. All the new textbooks have a reasonable number of answers that can be easily understood at the end of the learning process. I may mention, in addition to questions and answers, approximate texts from the Bible and the Liturgy as well as prayers, should also be memorized.

Can the United States make a contribution to the catechetical movement?

I have traveled much in the United States and have given 30–40 hour courses in catechetics at Notre Dame, the University of Portland, the University of San Francisco and St. Louis University. (This is the same basic course I give in Africa, the Philippines, India and Australia.)

Nowhere have I seen a more interested and generous laity who not only support your incomparable school system, but are ready to help the Church, especially in instructing the many Catholics in public schools. And the already solid religious knowledge and practice of so many American Catholics is certainly due largely to the self-sacrificing teaching sisters. In short, in no country have I discovered more vigorous and energetic catechists willing to be trained in modern catechetics. Good work is being done, but can you improve it?

At present the catechetical movement in the U. S. is not as advanced as in the lands north of the Alps, where it is in touch with the biblical, liturgical and theological revivals. Finally, there is a great disproportion between the potential and the actual number of first-class catechetical specialists and thinkers who can form these catechists to take part in the catechetical movement.

This disproportion is gradually decreasing. The sisters especially are demanding an even better special training for themselves. I may mention that many of the shortcomings may stem from an inadequate training of many priests in modern catechetics. Yet this criticism is not confined to the States. Many of the bishops at Eichstatt voiced this criticism of present seminary training and asked for concrete plans to introduce solid catechetical training programs into their seminaries. The United States has the potential to make a large and important contribution to the modern catechetical movement if it would guide the enthusiastic catechists—priests, sisters, laity—with the principles outlined at Eichstatt. The mere recognition that there is a weakness in the catechetical training of seminarians is already the beginning of progress.

Father Cladreau Warns: "A certain pedagogy of religious instruction can convey religious information—what might even be called 'religious beliefs'—without developing 'believers.' It can transmit Christian truths without making a person live by faith. All catechists must beware of this temptation or illusion. It is so easy to remain on the level of knowledge or beliefs. It is ever so much more difficult to pass to the level of conversion and faith. All of us need always fear that we are only producing 'hearers' when we should really be producing 'believers.'"

Principles of Modern Catechetics

OUR AIM

1. CATECHESIS CARRIES OUT THE COMMAND OF CHRIST TO PROCLAIM GOD'S MESSAGE OF SALVATION TO ALL MEN.

Christ carried out the will of His Father by giving His Church the commission "to preach the Gospel to every creature," "to make disciples" for Him and to provide Him with "witnesses throughout the world." (Mk. 16:15; Mt. 28:19; Acts 1:8). The catechist does what Christ did and commissioned the Church to do: He proclaims the Good News of Salvation, he helps men to accept it and to become disciples who will give witness to it. Catechesis, then, does more than teach the doctrines of the Church; it wins men (children, adolescents, adults) for Christ and after baptism unites them further to Him.

All principles and methods of catechizing flow from the missionary command of Christ.

OUR MESSAGE

2. CATECHESIS PROCLAIMS THE MERCIFUL LOVE OF THE FATHER FOR US AND THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD'S KINGDOM.

Carrying out the commission of Christ, the Church brings a message from God which surpasses by far what the heart of men can think of or hope for (cf. 1 Cor. 2:10; Eph. 3:20).

The Church proclaims to all people that the eternal and grace-giving Kingdom of God is at hand, a Kingdom prefigured in the Old Testament, begun by Christ in the New and growing toward the fullness of glory at the end of time. (Mk. 1:15; Mt. 24; 14; 25: 34). All men are invited to the wedding feast prepared by the King of Kings from all eternity. (Mt. 22:2ff).

This message proclaims that God is not merely an idea or a remote and silent being, but a living personal God, the Almighty Creator and the Eternal Father. It tells of a world not drifting into chaos but being transformed into "a new heaven and a new earth." (Apoc. 21:1). It speaks not of the dissolution of all things but of a "new creature" and an eternal and living union with our Father in Heaven.

3. CATECHESIS IS CHRIST-CENTERED, REFLECTING THE FULFILLMENT IN AND THROUGH CHRIST OF THE FATHER'S LOVING DESIGN.

God the Father carried out His plan through Christ, His Son, born of the Virgin Mary, our Saviour and Lord. Salvation is found only in Him. (Acts. 4:12). Through Christ we know about the Father and receive the Good News about the Father's Kingdom. By His death, resurrection and ascension, Christ saves us from our sins. He works in us through the Holy Spirit and leads us toward that day when He will judge all men and bring the world to its perfection. He is the Word (John 1:1), the Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5), the Way and the Life. (John 14:16).

Catechesis gives due importance to the historical treatment of God's design: how God prepared for Christ's coming in the Old Testament, how His coming brought about our salvation, and how Christ continues to communicate Himself through the Holy Spirit till He returns as the Lord of glory.

4. CATECHESIS PROCLAIMS THAT CHRIST CONTINUES TO LIVE AND WORK IN HIS CHURCH THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE MINISTRY OF HIS SHEPHERDS.

By the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church and particularly in the hierarchy, Christ gathers men together through His word, sanctifies and gives them life through the mystery of His passion, resurrection and ascension communicated in the Sacra-

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This set of fundamental norms was agreed upon at the International Study Week on Mission Catechetics; Eichstaett, Germany, July 21-28, 1960.

ments and gives them power to be witnesses before the world.

The Church is truly Christ's Body. He unites the members to Himself, the Head, and to one another, and assigns to each member a specific function. The Church is the chosen race, a people God means to have for Himself, a holy people called to priestly service in the world (cf. 1 Pet. 2:9). The Church is the city built on the mountain top, illumined by Christ's light and shining brightly for all nations to see. (cf. Mt. 5:14; Isaias 2). It is the family of God on earth, the home which the Father offers to all wanderers, the community of men advancing to its eternal destiny.

5. CATECHESIS EMPHASIZES THAT WORSHIP IS THE HEART OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY LIFE.

Whenever the Church celebrates liturgy, she assembles as a holy people. Christ is in her midst and she is vivified by the Holy Spirit. In the Service of the Word (Mass of the Catechumens) Christ nourishes His Church by the word of life and carries her prayer up to the Father. In the celebration of the Eucharist (Mass of the Faithful) Christ engulfs her in the sacrifice of the redemption and saturates her anew with His life. By the one Eucharistic Bread, the many are made one body (1 Cor. 10:17). By the Good Tidings, the prayer and the sacramental celebration, the people are filled with inner strength, spiritual knowledge and understanding in order to proclaim the Word of God without fear. (cf. Acts 4: 31).

Worship is primarily directed to the praise of God. At the same time it is the highest expression of catechesis. Catechesis leads to worship and draws its life from worship. Worship is the inexhaustible source of faith, grace and the apostolate.

OUR RESPONSE

6. CATECHESIS TEACHES US TO RESPOND TO GOD'S CALL BY AN INNER CHANGE OF HEART MANIFESTED IN A LIFE OF FAITH AND HOPE AND OF LOVING OBEDIENCE TO HIS COMMANDS.

Man's first response to the message of salvation is that inner change of heart described in the Gospel as absolutely necessary to enter the Kingdom. Turning to God, man begins to realize all that God has done, is doing, and will do for him. In this acceptance of Christ, which must be made by catechumen and Christian alike, man recognizes the God of Love Who will save him from his sins. Repenting of his sins and filled with joy at the recognition of His Saviour, he is moved to obey the commandment of love. "The man who loves God is the man who keeps the commandments he has from me." (John 14:21).

7. CATECHESIS MAKES THE CHRISTIAN AWARE OF HIS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WORLD AND THE BETTERMENT OF ITS CONDITION.

The Christian sees the world as the work and possession of the Father in heaven, and feels responsible for it as "son and heir." What is called the "profane" or "natural" order is no less from the hand of God. The Christian must value it in itself if he is to contribute to its sanctification in Christ. This is particularly true of the social order. If the Christian does not endeavor to restore it to its proper condition in regard to family, professional, economic, civic and cultural life, he is betraying the trust of his heavenly Father.

8. CATECHESIS LEADS THE CHRISTIAN TO SHARE THE FAITH WITH OTHERS.

Catechesis makes the Christian keenly aware that the growth and welfare of God's kingdom depend on him. It stimulates missionary spirit so that the followers of Christ strive for sanctity, not only for the sake of their own salvation and greater happiness, but that their fellowmen may see their good example and praise the Father Who is in heaven. (Mt. 5:16). It is the Holy Spirit Who makes them witnesses of His Word and Life, and enables each one according to the measure of his faith and the gifts he has received from God, to communicate the message of salvation with its spiritual values to all with whom he comes in contact. Sanctity of life, the praise and joy of Christians, their contentment and assurance, their willingness and ability to share the message, and especially their love which embraces even enemies, are the signs by which others

are led to experience the realities and values of God's Kingdom.

OUR METHOD

9. CATECHESIS, FOLLOWING GOD'S METHOD, PROCLAIMS "THE WONDERFUL WORKS OF GOD," WHICH SHOW FORTH THE TRUTH AND ESPECIALLY THE LOVE CONTAINED IN THEM, MOVING THE HEART AND INSPIRING THE WHOLE LIFE.

Catechesis follows God's method of proclaiming the Glad Tidings of salvation. The wonderful works of God as narrated in the Old Testament, the miracles, discourses, and events in the New Testament, lead us to an understanding of the divine message and of its impact in our lives. (Cf. Heb.. 1:1). In these events God has come close to us, He has revealed and united Himself to us and He has shown us the way to live through Him and in Him. Catechesis is at the service of this divine Revelation and adapts itself to God's own way of winning men.

10. CATECHESIS EMBRACES A FOURFOLD PRESENTATION OF THE FAITH: THROUGH LITURGY, BIBLE, SYSTEMATIC TEACHING AND THE TESTIMONY OF CHRISTIAN LIVING.

Each of these forms of presentation has its own specific function in the winning of the non-Christian and the development of the Christian. Catechesis strives to combine liturgy, Bible, doctrine and the testimony of Christian living, so that the organic unity of the Christian message is more clearly presented.

Liturgy:

The liturgy does more than communicate the Christian Mystery to the mind of the participant. It uses sound pedagogical principles: the intuitive process, activity, teaching by experience, the imparting of values. It appeals to the entire person, the sensibilities, the intellect and the will. It is the means of impregnating the whole life with the Spirit of Christ. For, in the liturgy, the Mystery of Redemption is not only proclaimed through the words of the Holy Scripture, but is also expressed in prayers and hymns, presented in sacred signs and rendered sacramentally present and efficacious.

Bible:

Catechesis is as inseparable from the Bible, the inspired word of God, as a plant from its roots. The Bible is the basis of the Church's proclamation and thus also of her catechesis. We use the Bible to follow the history of salvation in the way God Himself made it known. These sacred books take us from the creation of the world to its end and show us how Christ is the fulfillment of all.

Systematic Teaching:

The systematic presentation of the faith has its roots in the Creeds and preaching of the early Christian proclamation, and has derived its organic development from the authoritative teaching of the Church throughout the ages. The catechism gives the learner spiritual insight into the relationship between the faith and Christian life and enables him to cope with the questions of the day as an articulate Christian, and to express his faith to those who inquire about it.

Testimony of Christian Living:

The Christian message and teaching is borne out through the witness of a Christian life. The life of the Church and her saints show us repeatedly that Christ lives and works in the Church. The witness of a Christian life by individuals and by the community of the faithful, not only nourishes the faith of Catholics, but is the way that ordinarily leads the non-Christian to Christ and to the Church.

11. CATECHESIS ADAPTS ITSELF TO THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF PEOPLES, SHOWS DUE APPRECIATION OF THEIR LAUDABLE VIEWS AND CUSTOMS AND INTEGRATES THEM HARMONIOUSLY INTO A CHRISTIAN WAY OF LIFE.

The message of the living God should contact the living man, move his innermost heart, and convert him from within. Before the catechist begins his task God has already worked in the individuals and nations of His creation through His truth and grace, moving them to seek and attain their salvation in Christ. (Acts. 17:26-27). In

the love of the Good Shepherd, the catechist seeks to recognize the special character, manner of thought, outlook, customs and culture of his catechumens. Beginning at the point where they can follow him, he seeks to instruct them according to the psychology of age-group, sex and special circumstance. Guided by the Holy Spirit he enters into their hidden problems and leads them to adopt Christ's way of thinking as the best solution. He seeks in patience to correct whatever is false and erroneous but humbly endeavors to mould into the Christian way of life "whatever things are true, whatever honorable, whatever just, whatever holy, whatever lovable, whatever of good repute, if there be any virtue, if anything worthy of praise." (Phil. 4:8).

12. CATECHESIS INTRODUCES THE CATECHUMEN INTO A LIVING COMMUNITY AND HELPS HIM TO STRIKE FIRM ROOTS IN IT.

The life of faith is a life in the community of believers. The Apostles received their formation in the community which Christ gathered around Himself as the family of God. (Mt. 12:19). Those who were converted at the sermon of St. Peter were "taken into the community of the faithful which was inspired by the Holy Spirit" (Acts. 2:41 ff.). They found a home in the communal life of the primitive Church. Likewise, the believers today should welcome and embrace the newly baptized. Special groups may be needed, apart from the family and the parish, to sustain and stimulate the new Catholic in his faith. For only in the community, can a Christian recognize the full meaning of the Lord's message and experience the bonds of Charity which unite all men in Christ.

Directives for the Catechist

I. THE DISPOSITIONS OF A CATECHIST

1. *The sense of prayer.* The catechist speaks in the name of God, and it is God alone Who will give him the words of truth and open the hearts of his hearers.

2. *Purity of intention.* The actions of the catechist must radiate the love of Christ in his own life, so that his hearers will recognize the Message of the Lord in his words.

3. *Fidelity to the Church.* The catechist has the right to teach only because it has been given to him by the Bishop in the name of the Church. He does not teach his own ideas, but the doctrine of the Church.

4. *The desire to communicate a living faith to others.* The goal of the catechist is to win not only the intelligence, but above all, the heart of his hearers and to lead them to live Christ in His Church. A mere aquaintance with the faith which does not show itself in action is not a living faith.

II. THE PERIOD OF PRE-CATECHESIS

5. *Pre-catechesis.* Since catechumens are not yet believers, it is necessary to have a more or less prolonged period of pre-catechesis before the complete formulation of the doctrine is given to them. During this period, the catechist should endeavor with the help of grace to awaken in the catechumens a desire for God, to stir up the smoldering embers of spiritual longing, and to show how such longing finds its fulfillment in the divine truth. He must help them to acknowledge whatever is disordered in their lives, particularly their attachment to earthly values. He must arouse in them a longing for forgiveness and a desire for generous self-surrender to God. In this way, he will prepare the soil for the sowing of the Word of God. Unless these spiritual aspirations are awakened in them,

These suggestions grew out of the discussions of the International Study Week on Mission Catechetics, Eichstaett, Germany, 1960. A condensation.

the catechumens will remain incapable of understanding the meaning of the Christian message.

III. THE PREPARATION OF A LESSON

6. *Awaken interest.* This cannot be done in a superficial manner. In the beginning, the catechist must explore the secret aspirations and problems of his hearers to awaken in them a spiritual interest. It is important that his opening words be not commonplace or depressing, but the answer to an interior need. This is especially important when the catechumen is still far from the faith.

7. *Present a living reality:* an event, a passage from the Bible, a liturgical action, an incident from Church History, from the life of a saint, or from daily life. It must be conveyed in a simple, calm manner, directed to the heart of the hearer.

When giving a biblical catechesis, a start may be made with the reading of a text in order to bring out its deep significance.

8. *Unfold the sense of what has been presented, aiming always at the heart as well as the mind.* That is why the catechist must avoid making a purely intellectual exposition. The best effect comes from a simple and lively discussion in which the listeners have full freedom to participate. Such a dialogue enables each catechumen to seek with the catechist and to express in his own words the truths discovered. The catechist directs and develops these findings until the truth is clear and vivid. He tries to have all the points understood, and then ends by a lucid summary of the different steps.

9. *Stimulate a personal response to the call of God.* It is not sufficient for the catechumens to understand the truth, they must also be led by the catechist to respond to it. He must show them how to pray, either spontaneously, or by using a prepared formula, or by some exterior act or gesture of worship. He must invite them to review their lives, to see more clearly the duties which await them, and to make the appropriate resolutions.

10. *Learning by heart is essential.* This applies to certain biblical passages and other basic texts, not only that they be rooted in the memory, but that they penetrate the thinking and life of the person. The memory must always be at the service of the faith. The catechist, however, should never require passages to be memorized if they have not been explained in the lesson or understood clearly by the hearers. A mechanical committing to memory of formulas is not sufficient for a vital grasp of Christian doctrine.

11. *Avoid rigidity in the use of the above steps.* The catechist should employ the above method with a certain suppleness and freedom according to the matter to be explained and the age of the catechumens.

IV. SOME CONCRETE POINTS ON PEDAGOGICAL TECHNIQUES and METHOD

12. *Recourse to pedagogical techniques in order to give variety to the lesson and to stimulate the interior awakening and the exterior activity of the hearers.* The use of techniques offers the catechist the possibility of winning not only the intellect but the whole being of the person: mind, heart, imagination, creative ability, and power of expression.

He must always remember that these diverse means have one goal, to help the catechumen to open wide his heart to the activity of the Holy Spirit.

(a) *Means to awaken interior activity:* create an atmosphere, present a vivid reality, unfold its meaning, show its bearing, define it, make a comparison, stress a motivation, proofs, draw conclusions, present a clear summary, a repetition, drive home a point, an application, bring the lesson into contact with daily life, lead to action, arouse consent.

(b) *Means to stimulate exterior activity:* narrate an event, make observations, ask questions, elucidate, show an object, give an explanation, start a discussion, read aloud, make others read silently or aloud, or recite or learn by heart; interrogate, direct practical exercises, arrange choral recitation, or drawing either in copy books or on the blackboard. Assign tasks, and make children look for facts, classify them, reflect on them, formulate them sometimes before and sometimes after the class. Assign home-work, and insist on the keeping of a note-book.

Also, hold singing practices and practise of recollection, prayer, meditations, exhort to examination of conscience; perform acts of worship in common; celebrate feasts, stage playlets varying the actors, prepare

xhibitions. Finally, use audio-visual aids, all pictures, slides, tape-recordings, gramphone records.

13. *Religious formation must be directed ward prayer, action, and community conciousness.* Religious formation is not only nstruction but education, directed toward rayer, action and community consciousess.

(a) The catechist will cultivate a taste or prayer in his hearers, if he encourages hem to pray in their own words and to use ormulas which they understand. To this nd, he will offer them a certain number f prayers which they can gradually make heir own. Naturally, the common prayers f a Christian, daily prayers, psalms and exts from the missal, should be the foundation of the collection, which should relect the faith and prayer of the Church. It hould be, at the same time, a means to xpress personal piety.

(b) There is no genuine religious formaion without education to action, and above all, formation of conscience. The catechist must continually and persistently inculcate his in his hearers. He must likewise endeavor to lead them to personal maturity, to self-reliance, and to a sense of responsibility.

(c) Still more, since Christian life develops in the Church, the catechist must avoid forming in his pupils an extremely individualistic personality. To this end, he must bring them into contact with the Parish community, and above all with its liturgical life. He must make them realize the duties they will have to perform for the community and he will encourage them to associate with an appropriate group of youths or adults. In this way he will introduce them into the concrete and realistic charity of the Church, and will give them a sense of apostolate among Christians and non-Christians.

14. *Catechesis does not stop with the reception of the sacraments nor with the end of the school years.* The catechist must continue to lead his pupils to a more perfect union with God, and to a more personal conviction of the Christian truths, so that, when his pupil becomes an adult in the faith, he may continue in the pursuit of an ever-increasing absorption into the fullness of Christ. (Eph. 4:13).

15. *It is by study, reflection, written notes and prayer that the catechist should prepare his lessons.* He must be constantly thinking in terms of those to whom he will speak.

Before addressing his hearers, the catechist should ask himself three questions:

(a) what am I going to teach (content)?

(b) where should I be leading my hearer (pedagogy of the living faith)?

(c) how shall I arrange my lesson?

A lesson of catechesis is a work of art which is acceptable only if it is well prepared.

Without constant effort it is impossible to be a good catechist.

GUIDE

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Guide Lights

EFFECTIVE RELIGIOUS TEACHING . . .

Frank Sheed asks: "Are Catholics, by and large, so equipped with knowledge of the doctrines of the Church, that if some outsider came along and wanted enlightenment, the first educated Catholic he came to would give it to him, would really expound the Church's main doctrines in such a way that the inquirer would think the matter worth pursuing with a priest? Would he, by the time he reached the priest, already have learned a great deal? . . .

"A Catholic receives the gift of truth and life that the Church has given to him, through Christ our Lord. Is he in a kind of anguish at the thought that there are others who know nothing of these gifts and are not receiving them? Can he take it quietly, can he go about his business and only occasionally say: 'Poor fellows, they are unlucky'? Or is it a matter of anguish that fellow human beings should be starved of the gifts of truth and life that Christ wanted them to have? Is he as much concerned at that fact and conscious that he ought to be doing something about it, as he would be if he heard that fellow creatures lacked bread?"

READY TO ANSWER . . .

America recently carried this excellent advice: "Protestants asking Catholics questions about the Church don't want to be told to go see a priest." This remark, which is so familiar and true, was made by Irvin Arkin, former Lutheran clergyman and a convert to Catholicism, in a recent address to a Te Deum International group. "Protestants," he continued, "feel a hatred toward the Church because of fear that is engendered by misunderstanding, which in turn is caused by ignorance. Protestants labor under thousands of misconceptions about the Church, and only intelligent, articulate answers can satisfy their doubts."

What is the answer to this problem? One might say, by way of introduction that there is an immensely wide area of subjects on which there is no official Catholic opinion, but only the opinions of Catholics, who are free to discuss these matters, either because they do not pertain to faith or morals, or if they do, because the teaching authority of the Church has made no authoritative pronouncement on them.

Moreover, when a question is put to a non-Catholic, it is usually understood that he is being asked for *his* opinion. In the individualistic tradition of Protestantism, he speaks only for himself. But when a question is put to a Catholic, the question generally means: What does the *Church* say about this matter? To give a satisfactory answer, a Catholic must know and be able to explain the revealed truths taught by the Church, which are many and profound. Not to mention the Trinity and the Real Presence, there is the perennial question of how God has dominion over man and yet how man is free. And there is always the problem of suffering. A Catholic must also know the Church's moral teaching and its application to personal, as well as to social and international problems that are being debated in the public forum. More often than not, these problems are exceedingly complex and not easy to solve.

If a Catholic doesn't know the answer to a question asked of him, in most cases he need not go to a priest to find it. The Catholic press has its limitations and is conscious of them, but there is no question raised these days which has not been discussed somewhere in the Catholic press—in diocesan newspapers, in magazines, in a constant flow of pamphlets and in offerings of the Catholic book publishers, which range from the popular to the scholarly.

Thus, a partial solution to the problem raised by Mr. Arkin is to show the student in the Catholic school and the adult layman where to find information on his own initiative, and to instill in him an intelligent zeal based on the importance of his role in the apostolate. Indeed, the laity has a challenging part to play in this work of public relations for the Church. Of the more than 150,000 converts who enter the Church each year in the United States, it is safe to say that with few exceptions their first contact with the Church was by way of a layman—who either knew the answer to the question asked of him, or looked it up on his own, or went to see the priest himself, or else left it as the open question which it was. In doing so, he showed interest and charity and intelligence. Like Peter the fisherman, he did not sit back and let his line idly drift; he was alert to the first, faint nibble.

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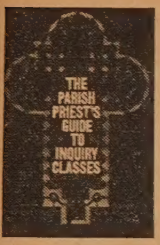

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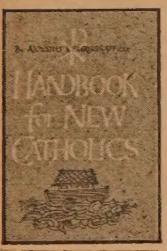

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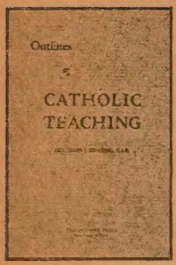

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